

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, today was a remarkable day in this new 110th Congress. This House in a bipartisan way came together, under the leadership of Congresswoman Diana DeGette of Colorado and Michael Castle of Delaware, to pass a bipartisan measure with a strong vote, 253-174, a bill that would expand the stem cell research in this country and lead to great cures, cures which promise to help people turn around their lives, people that have suffered through debilitating and life-threatening diseases.

Stem cell research holds the promise to help those who suffer from heart disease, various cancers, diabetes, Alzheimer's, kidney disease, liver disease, Parkinson's, to name a few.

Breakthroughs in research are happening every day. But with the bill passed today in this new Congress, even more can be done to provide hope and lifesaving cures to the millions of Americans affected by these diseases.

While there are ethical issues surrounding medical research of any kind, I do not believe that we should unreasonably restrict new medical research and prevent Americans from receiving lifesaving treatments. President Bush's current restrictions are unreasonable and arbitrary.

I believe it is imperative that legislation concerning stem cell research contain strong ethical standards over the conduct of research, and the bill passed today provides such high standards.

Many people have asked me about my best day during my first term in the 109th Congress that just concluded. I can say, without question, the day was May 24, 2005, because it was a day that gave the best hope for lifesaving cures for so many. Those hopes were, unfortunately, dashed when President Bush vetoed the bill, H.R. 810 in the last Congress.

We have come together again, passed this bill with an even stronger bipartisan vote, and I expect it will go to the Senate and pass there again with another strong bipartisan vote. And I would urge the President to reconsider his position. So many people's lives, the quality of lives for their families depend on this research continuing.

This bill, as I said, contained detailed ethical standards on this type of research, and that is an important part of this legislation going forward. This issue has united Americans and actually united this Congress in powerful ways and with a strong voice.

My home State of Missouri has taken a lead in this debate. Expanding stem cell research is supported by 72 percent of Americans from across the political spectrum, and that goes for my home State of Missouri. This past November, Missourians came out to the polls in record numbers in support of stem cell research that holds the potential for lifesaving cures. Our State passed a ballot initiative that ensures Missourians will have access to any stem cell research and cures that are allowed under Federal law and available to other Americans. And it also included strong ethical standards for conducting that research.

Acting in response to the countless Americans who want a new direction in this new Congress, we have begun to respond. Today, the people's House actually acted on behalf of the American people and generations to come. Members from both sides of the aisle came together in support of the pursuit of lifesaving cures and passed H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Act.

It is my strong hope that the message of hope sent by both the American people and their Representatives will be heard by President Bush. By signing this vital legislation now into law, the President can provide the hope of potential lifesaving cures to millions of Americans.